

# כִּי־תָבוֹא

## KI TAVO/WHEN YOU COME IN Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8

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I'm not sure if you noticed, but this week's parasha opens with what we have all been waiting for!

*Devarim 26:1 "And it shall be, when you come into (כִּי־תָבוֹא) the land which יְהוָה (Yahwey) your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it,*

What we are reading this week has to do with **our longed-for and glorious future!** This is an **eternal promise** that the time will come when we will **arrive at the border of the land**, ready to **enter it and receive it as our inheritance!** **Baruch HaShem, יהוה!**

The **Israelites** who stood on the east side of the Jordan, **ready to cross over into the Promised Land** had endured all of the **trials and tribulations** of the **wilderness**. They were the **matured** group of Israelites who were now being taught by Moses, the **challenges and temptations** of the **Promised Land**. We, too, long to stand on the banks of this river, but the question for us is....are we **ready for entrance into that land?!!** Have we **matured** enough as a result of the **trials and tribulations** of our own **wilderness experience?** Or is our **maturity** all part of the **purpose** of the coming **tribulation?**

It is no coincidence that our Torah reading, **Ki Tavo**, follows last week's **Ki Teitzei**. In fact, our Torah reading last week ended with this verse:

*Devarim 25:19 "Therefore it shall be, when יְהוָה your Elohim has given you **rest** from your enemies all around, in the land which יְהוָה your Elohim is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.*

Now remember that there were no chapter or verse markings in the ancient Torah scrolls, so what you would have directly following the above verse, perhaps even in the same breath, would be the following first verses of our parasha this week:

*Devarim 26:1 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which יְהוָה your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it,<sup>2</sup> "that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that יְהוָה your Elohim is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where יְהוָה your Elohim chooses to make His Name abide.*

Last week we discussed how **Amalek** represents not only a **wicked people** and a **cruel enemy of Israel from generation to generation**, but he is also **associated with our own inner doubt and other negative, internal struggles**. With that thought in mind, we can see that once we "**blot out every remembrance of Amalek from under heaven**", we are now **ready for the joy** of presenting our **first fruits to יהוה** in the **Promised Land!**

Devarim continues with the commandment for the **presentation of the first fruits**:

*Devarim 26:3 "And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to יהוה your Elohim that I have come to the country which יהוה swore to our fathers to give us.'<sup>4</sup> "Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of יהוה your Elohim.<sup>5</sup> "And you shall answer and say before יהוה your Elohim: 'My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.*

Some of these verses may be vaguely familiar to you. You may recall them from your **Passover Hagaddah**. In the **Passover context**, this is recalled as a **remembrance of freedom from bondage**. In the Devarim context, however, it is recalled as a **remembrance about arrival**...about a **promise kept**...about **conclusion**. Verse 5 is difficult to translate into English because it is even questionable in Hebrew what is actually being said. Here are some of the translations:

- My father was a **wandering Aramean**
- My ancestor was a **fugitive Aramean**
- An **Aramean** attempted to **destroy** my father
- A **perishing Syrian** was my father

The various translations reflect the difficulty in **identifying “my father”**. **Aramean** probably refers to the fact that the **ancestors of Israel** came from the region known as **“Aram alongside the river”** (Bereshith/Genesis 24:10). Many commentators identify **“my father”** as **Jacob**. The Hebrew word translated as **“perishing”** could refer to the **famine that forced Jacob and his family to migrate to Egypt**. Or, when translated as **“wandering”** or **“fugitive**, it could refer to **Jacob’s flight from Esau or from Laban**.

**Rashbam** (12<sup>th</sup> century, rabbi from France), believes that **Abraham** was the **Aramean in question**. **Abraham is from Aram and leaves his home**:

*Bereshith/Genesis 20:13 "And it came to pass, when Elohim caused me to wander from my father's house....*

The book of **Hebrews** may support this idea of **Abraham** being the **“wanderer”**:

*Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*

So in Devarim 26:5, as the **Israelite farmer** brings the **offering of the first fruits**, he **identifies with his forefathers**. It is especially interesting that **Hebrews 11:8** speaks of **Abraham** as the one **leaving in faith for the place of his inheritance**, just like the **Israelites** who left Egypt in **faith** and finally have arrived at the land of their **inheritance**.

The book of Romans speaks of **Abraham** as being the **father of our faith** and **Ephesians** tells us as **believers** that we are now **partakers of the Abrahamic Covenant**:

***Ephesians 2:12** that at that time you were without Messiah, being **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel** and **strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without Elohim in the world.<sup>13</sup> **But now in Messiah Yeshua** you who once were far off have been **brought near by the blood of Messiah**.*

Now let's take another look at that "**inheritance**" in Hebrews 11 that **Abraham left his home for**. We know that יהוה took him to the Promised Land of Israel, but still **Abraham was looking for something more**:

***Hebrews 11:10** for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is Yah.*

We are familiar with **Yeshua's words** when He told His disciples that He was going to "**prepare a place for them**":

***John 14:2** "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you.**"<sup>3</sup> "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

In **Revelation**, we see this "**prepared place**" coming down **from the heavens** - coming to a **renewed earth**. The timing for this is **AFTER** the **1,000 year millennium**....the 1,000 year reign of **Yeshua on earth**:

***Revelation 21:2** Then I, John, saw the **holy city, New Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from Yah, **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**.*

Now what I wanted you to be sure to see is that everything points to an ultimate **future home on this earth!** Do you have a picture in your mind of being an **angel** with wings flitting from cloud to cloud? Our heavenly Father has **established the earth as man's dwelling forever!** The only difference is the **heavenly will join with the earthly**.

***Psalm 78:69** And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like **the earth which He has established forever**.*

***Matthew 5:5** Blessed are the meek, **for they shall inherit the earth**.*

***Psalm 37:29** The **righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever**.*

Let's continue on in our parasha:

***Devarim 26:6** 'But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us.<sup>7</sup> 'Then we cried out to יהוה Elohim of our fathers, and יהוה heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression.<sup>8</sup> 'So יהוה brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.<sup>9</sup> 'He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and*

honey"; <sup>10</sup> 'and now, behold, **I have brought the first fruits of the land** which you, O יהוה, have given me.' Then you shall set it before יהוה your Elohim, and worship before יהוה your Elohim <sup>11</sup>"So you shall rejoice in every good thing which יהוה your Elohim has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.

As the **Israelite** brings the **first fruits of the land** to set before יהוה, he has truly come **full circle**. **Bereshith/Genesis 4** tells us the story of **Cain and Abel and their offerings**:

***Bereshith 4:2** .... Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to יהוה. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And יהוה respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*

Did you notice that **Abel** brought to יהוה the **firstborn of his flock**? However, it is likely that although **Cain** brought an offering of the **fruit** of the ground, it was **not a first fruits offering**. To יהוה, the **firstborn** and the **first fruits** are extremely important. The Bible tells us that both **firstborns** and **first fruits** belong **only to the Creator**. They are **identified as His property**. So....**Cain kept for himself what belonged to the Creator**.

So, now in **Devarim 26:6**, the Israelites are at a point where they are **ready to return to the Promised Land** and appropriately **give of their first fruits**.

**Believers in Messiah** are also identified as **first fruits** which **belong to the Almighty**:

***James 1:18** Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of **first fruits** of His creatures.*

Let's take another look at the **ceremony** of bringing in the **first fruits**. The **Mishnah** gives a detailed account of what this looked like:

Those that were near to Jerusalem brought fresh figs and grapes, and those that were far away brought dried figs and raisins. Before them went the ox, its horns overlaid with gold, and with a wreath of olive leaves on its head.

The flute was played before them until they came near Jerusalem. When they were near to Jerusalem, they sent messengers before them and bedecked their first fruits. The rulers and the prefects and the treasurers of the Temple went forth to meet them. According to the honor due to them that came in, they used to go forth. All the craftsmen in Jerusalem used to greet them, saying, "Brothers, men of such-and-such a place, you are welcome." The flute was played before them until they reached the Temple.

Historically, we know that most **civilizations had gods of nature** that focused on the **harvest**. They also had **special ceremonies** where they dedicated some of their **fruits to their gods**. But the **focus** of the Israelites with their **first fruits** was very **different**. Whereas **other civilizations** were praising their god as the **creator and sustainer of life**, the significance of the **first fruits declaration for the**

**Israelites** was that it was **not about nature**, but about **history**; a brief sketch of the **sequence of events** from the **days of Abraham** to the **exodus** and then to the **conquest of the Promised Land**.

Their **history belonged to each one of them**. In fact, that **same history** belongs to **each one of us**. **Knowing the story**, beginning with **Abraham** (the father of our faith), is an **essential part of our citizenship** as a part of **Israel**. Read again Devarim 26:3-11 and watch how the **bearer of the first fruits** reviews the **history from the period of the forefathers up until the inheritance of the Promised Land**:

- 26:3 – “**I** declare...**I** have come” – 1<sup>st</sup> person **singular**
- 26:6 – “They mistreated **us**”, “afflicted **us**”, and “laid hard bondage on **us**” – 1st person **plural**
- 26:10 – “**I** have brought the first fruits... given to **me**” – returns to 1<sup>st</sup> person **singular**
- 26:11 – **Rejoicing** is done **collectively**

As the **individual Israelite farmer** begins to recite the **history**, he **acknowledges himself as a part of the whole** of Israel. Only after he has **completed the historical review** does he move back to the **singular** in verse 10. Throughout the **Torah** we read that **collective identification** is more important than **individuality**. **Unified Israel** is **greater than the sum of its individuals**. Do you understand what I’m saying? If three individuals make up **unified** Israel, **1+1+1 becomes greater than 3!** When we accept the **redemption** that is available to us **individually** through **Yeshua the Messiah**, then we become a part of that **community of Israel** whose Adonai is the same as the **Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. When we have **matured** and **unified to that point**...it is time to **rejoice!**

Let’s take another look at that **commandment to rejoice**:

*Devarim 26:11 "So you shall **rejoice** in every good thing which יייהיי your Elohim has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.*

What does it really mean to “**rejoice**” (samach - שמח)?

The word “**rejoice**” (samach - שמח) appears again as a **command** later in the parasha when we come across the **construction of the altar on Mt. Ebal**:

*Devarim 27:6 "You shall build with whole stones the altar of יייהיי your Elohim, and offer burnt offerings on it to יייהיי your Elohim.<sup>7</sup> "You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and **rejoice** (samach - שמח) before יייהיי your Elohim.<sup>8</sup> "And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this Torah."*

And again, we find the same Hebrew word for “**rejoice**” (samach - שמח), here translated as “**joy**”, in our Torah portion in the **midst of the curses**:

*Devarim 28:47 " Because you did not serve יייהיי your Elohim with **joy** (samach - שמח) and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything,<sup>48</sup> "therefore you shall serve your*

*enemies, whom יהיה will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.*

Look carefully at **what the above verses are NOT saying**. It is not saying that these **curse**s will come upon the Israelites **for not serving Him** or even **for NOT keeping the commandments**. Rather they will come upon Israel **for NOT serving Him with joy** (samach - שמח) and **gladness of heart!** Therefore **joy** certainly cannot be just a **pleasant and happy feeling!**

**Devarim 28:47** says that **if there is not joy in your service**, you will end up **serving your enemies** in hunger, thirst, and in nakedness. If **joy** is so important that it's **lack of** becomes the **reason for all these terrible curses**, then let's take a look at a few verses in the **New Covenant Scriptures** to give us more **insight**. **Yeshua** speaks on **joy** and connects it with the **keeping of the commandments AND abiding in His love:**

*John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."<sup>11</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

**Joy** is connected with the **Holy Spirit:**

*Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

*Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

**Joy** is seen as **our connection to the agenda of the Almighty:**

*James 1:1 James, a bondservant of Yah and of Adonai Messiah Yeshua, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.<sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

*Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Yeshua, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of Yah.*

Praise Yah, the **restoration plan** of the Almighty includes an **everlasting "joy"** that seems more in line with how we would **normally define joy**. Plus, note that both **"joy"** and **"gladness"**, those two things for which we were **cursed for not having in Devarim 28:47**, will be **obtained by those returning:**

*Isaiah 51:11 So the ransomed of יהיה shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Okay, let's switch directions a bit and read more of our parasha:

*Devarim 27:1 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today."<sup>2</sup> "And it shall be, on the day when you*

*cross over the Jordan to the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime.<sup>3</sup> "You shall write on them all the words of this Torah, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as יהוה Elohim of your fathers promised you.<sup>4</sup> "Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime.<sup>5</sup> "And there you shall build an altar to יהוה your Elohim, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them.<sup>6</sup> "You shall build with whole stones the altar of יהוה your Elohim, and offer burnt offerings on it to יהוה your Elohim.*

**Upon crossing the Jordan**, the Israelites were commanded to **immediately travel** all the way up to **Mt. Ebal, one of the mountains overlooking Shechem**. After 40 years of wandering in the desert, what was the rush to get here? And **what was the importance of writing out the Torah on these stones?**

Once again we return to the **legacy of Abraham**. When **Abraham** first left his birthplace, he entered Canaan and **came to Shechem where he also built an altar to Elohim**:

*Bereshith/Genesis 12:5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.<sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.<sup>7</sup> Then יהוה appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to יהוה, who had appeared to him.*

A generation later, **Jacob** bought a plot of land in **Shechem** where he also built an **altar** and where **Joseph's** bones were later buried:

*Bereshith/Genesis 33:18 Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city.<sup>19</sup> And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money.<sup>20</sup> Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel (God, the God of Israel).*

By returning to **Shechem**, the Israelites established that **they were not newcomers to the Promised Land**. They were actually returning to **fulfill** the **promise** made to Abraham in **Bereshith 12:7!** Now you would think that as they sit on the **brink of the Promised Land**, they would have reached the **end of all of their challenges**. Not so! On the contrary, the **biggest challenges** will now enter in! And they will be **challenges** because they will not have the **appearance of challenges!** Remember this **warning?**

*Devarim 6:10 " So it shall be, when יהוה your Elohim brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,<sup>11</sup> "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant -- when you*

*have eaten and are full --<sup>12</sup> "then beware, lest you forget יהוה" who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

Perhaps that is why, after the **Israelite farmer** had **completed his first fruits ceremony** and given his tithe, he was then **required to say out loud**:

*Devarim 26:13 "then you shall say before יהוה" your Elohim: 'I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, **nor have I forgotten.***

Check your translation. Most will provide an additional word such as **"them"** to tell you **what has been "forgotten"**. But it is an **added word**. The **Hebrew literally** says, **"I have not forgotten."** **Period**. This is very interesting because we can connect this with something we studied a few weeks ago:

*Devarim 8:10 "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless יהוה" your Elohim for the good land which He has given you.*

This is the verse from which we get the **commandment** to bless יהוה **after the meal**. Note the very next verse:

*Devarim 8:11 " Beware that you do not forget יהוה" your Elohim....*

Did you ever wonder why the **commandment to bless יהוה after the meal** included **blessing Him "for the good land"**? The **inheritance of the land** ties back to the **Abrahamic covenant**. יהוה's **plan** is to give the **Promised Land** to His chosen people **Israel**, a place where they can keep His **Torah** and therefore be a **light to the whole world**. But our tendency to **"forget"** seems to be an **occupational hazard of receiving his blessings**:

*Devarim 11:14 'then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.<sup>15</sup> 'And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'<sup>16</sup> "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,*

Therefore the **prayer after the meal** is a **constant way of reminding us to "not forget"** the **"land"** and its inherent relationship with the **Abrahamic covenant** when we have **"eaten and are full"** (Devarim 6:9, 8:10, and 11:14, 15). When we **thank Him for the land**, we are **thanking Him for our future inheritance**. And we are also keeping in the forefront the **reason** why the Almighty gave us the **land – to become a great nation, His light to the world kept shining by the keeping of Torah in the land He selected**. The **Jews** have kept the commandment of **prayer after the meal** alive and is it any wonder? In Hebrew they are called **Yehudim** (יהודים) after Leah's fourth son, Judah (Yehuda - יהודה). **Judah** received his name when he was born as **his mother gave "thanks"**:



*Bereshith/Genesis 29:35 ... (she) bore a son, and said, "Now I will **praise** (יְהַלֵּל - **praise or thank**) יְהוָה." Therefore she called his name **Judah** (Yehuda - יְהוּדָה).*

So....back to our Torah reading. A good deal of our parasha is made up of the  **blessings and curses**; that is, the **divinely imposed consequences for obeying or disobeying the terms of the covenant**. This **ceremony between the mountains** is meant to impress on the Israelites that the **land** is given as the **place in which to fulfill the Torah**. **Obedience** would bring about a **utopia**, similar to the **Garden of Eden**. The result of their **disobedience** would bring about **certain hardship and exile**.

**Jeffrey Tigay** in the **JPS Torah Commentary** shared very interesting **chiastic structures** on the **blessing and the curses** as they are outlined in the Torah. A **chiastic** is a **literary structure** used in the Bible where **concepts or ideas** are placed in a **special symmetrical order** or pattern in order to **emphasize something**. The **A-B-C...C-B-A chiastic** is used many places in the Torah. This kind of **pattern** is used to give **emphasis to the inner concept** that appears **either once or twice in succession**. Also, it implies that the **other ideas are all important for leading up to** what we find in the **center of the chiastic**.

The following is Tigay's chiastic on the **blessings** from **Devarim 28**:

- A. Economic success (v. 3a)
- B. Fertility of soil (v. 3b)
- C. Fertility of humans and animals (v. 4)
- D. Abundant food (v. 5)
- E. Military success (v. 6)**
- E'. Military success (v. 7)**
- D'. Abundant food (v. 8)
- C'. Fertility of humans and animals (v.11)
- B'. Fertility of soil (v. 12a)
- A'. Economic success (v. 12b-13)

Notice that the **inner concept is "military success"**. The next chiastic arranges the **curses** from **Devarim 28**:

- A. Agricultural disaster (drought and hardened soil) (vv. 23-24)
- B. Defeat leading to becoming byword (vv. 25-26)
- C. Inflammation (v.27)
- D. Madness, blindness (vv. 28-29a)
- E. Constantly abused and robbed (v. 29b)
- F. Oppression (vv. 30-33a)**
- E'. Continually abused and downtrodden (v. 33b)
- D'. Madness from what one sees (v. 34)
- C'. Inflammation (v. 35)
- B'. Exile leading to becoming a byword (vv. 36-37)
- A'. Agricultural disaster (crop-destroying pests) (vv. 38-42)

Now think about how “**oppression**” relates to the time **leading up to the return of Messiah**. And all these curses are the result of:

*Devarim 28:47 "Because you did not serve יהוה your Elohim with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything,*

Remember that **joy** is **not just an emotion**, but **contentment** in knowing that we are **in line with the will of the Almighty**. Perhaps this is what **Paul** was referring to in **Philippians**:

*Philippians 4:12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.<sup>13</sup> I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Did you notice Paul’s reference to being “**well fed**”? Interesting. Paul knew the Scriptures. He knew where “**strength**” came from:

*Nehemiah 8:10 ... for the joy of יהוה is your strength."*

So here we are, back to the concept of “**joy**”. With the **fall festivals** coming, it gives us a chance to be obedient to “**joy**” (**samach** - שמח):

*Devarim 16:13 " You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress.<sup>14</sup> "And you shall rejoice (**samach** - שמח) in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates.*

Hope to see you there!

Shabbat Shalom!  
**Ardelle**